THE LANGUAGE OF DIVINE CONSCIOUSNESS: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL–POSTSTRUCTURALIST STUDY OF THE FIGURES OF PROPHETS, AVATARS, BUDDHAS, PHILOSOPHERS, AND SHAMANS

By: Jayanantaka

Abstract

This article examines the universal phenomenon of divine consciousness bearers—Prophets, Avatars, Buddhas, Shamans, and Philosophers—in the perspective of religious anthropology and poststructuralism. This paper departs from the thesis that all these figures are manifestations of the same absolute entity, but present in different "languages" according to their respective cultural contexts. Through an anthropological approach, they are understood as mediators between humans and the sacred; while through the poststructuralist lens (Foucault and Derrida), the differences between them are seen as variations of discourse and sign systems. This article interprets two key verses of the Qur'an, QS. Ghāfir [40]:78 and QS. Ibrāhīm [14]:4, as a form of Qur'anic recognition of apostolic plurality and the relativity of the language of revelation. The results of the study show that the "sent" is actually an absolute entity that speaks in many cultural idioms; The difference between Prophets, Avatars, Buddhas, Shamans, and Philosophers is simply the difference in the way language accommodates the same consciousness.
Keywords: divine consciousness, religious anthropology, poststructuralism, revelation, language, prophetic universalism

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This article examines the universal phenomenon of divine consciousness bearers—Prophets, Avatars, Buddhas, Shamans, and Philosophers—through the lenses of anthropology of religion and poststructuralist thought. It argues that these figures manifest the same absolute entity, expressed through different "languages" according to cultural contexts. From an anthropological perspective, they serve as mediators between the human and the sacred; from a poststructuralist view (Foucault, Derrida), their differences represent variations in discourse and sign systems. The article interprets two key Qur'anic verses (Q. 40:78 and Q. 14:4) as affirmations of the Qur'an's recognition of prophetic plurality and linguistic relativity. The study concludes that the one who is "sent" is a single absolute consciousness that speaks through multiple cultural idioms; the distinctions among Prophet, Avatar, Buddha, Shaman, and Philosopher are merely linguistic variations of the same awareness.
Keywords: divine consciousness, anthropology of religion, poststructuralism, revelation, language, prophetic universality

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Introduction

The phenomenon of the presence of spiritual figures carrying divine messages is a universal pattern in human history. In the Semitic tradition, the figure is called *the Prophet*; in India it is known *as Avatar*; in Buddhism, *Buddhism*; in tribal societies, *Shaman*; while in the rational world of the West, it appears as *a Philosopher*. Each has theological and symbolic characteristics, but anthropologically they all function as **mediators between human beings and transcendent reality** (Eliade 1963).

These differences in terms are not to be understood as differences in essence, but as differences in *language*—differences in the system of symbols that each culture uses to name experiences to the

absolute. Within the framework of poststructuralism, language not only names reality, but shapes it (Derrida 1978; Foucault 1972). Thus, "God", "Brahman", "Nirvana", or "Logos" are not distinct entities, but rather discourses that represent one universal divine consciousness through diverse languages.

The purpose of this article is to interpret the plurality of such divine consciousness bearers as linguistic variations of one absolute reality. The analysis was carried out with an anthropological-comparative approach and a poststructuralist reading of religious texts, especially the two verses of the Qur'an that affirm the plurality of the apostles and the relativity of the language of revelation.

Discussion

1. Divine Consciousness and Cross-Cultural Phenomena

In all civilizations, man feels the presence of something beyond himself. The experience of the "sacred" (*das Heilige*) became the source of the birth of religion, philosophy, and myth (Otto 1958). This phenomenon is always present through an intermediary figure—a human being who is a transcendent place of revelation.

From an anthropological perspective, the presence of figures such as the Prophet, Avatar, Buddha, and Shaman is a universal symbolic pattern. They are the *axis mundi*—the center where the human world meets the sacred reality (Eliade 1959). Their social function is similar: to maintain a balance between the empirical world and the world of meaning, between social structure and spiritual consciousness.

However, in the view of poststructuralism, this religious experience never appears without language. Revelation, enlightenment, or ecstasy do not come as pure meaning, but rather through a system of signs. In other words, **the divine is always in tongues**. When revelation enters history, it conforms to the "grammar" of the culture that is its medium.

2. Five Figures, Five Languages

The Prophet represents the language of law and revelation. He interpreted the divine voice into the social order, making the word the moral structure of society (Foucault 1980).
The avatar presents God in body form; the language of revelation turns into a mythological narrative that re-establishes *the dharma* (Doniger 1980).
The Buddha spoke through silence; consciousness became the new language of the absolute.The **shaman** articulates the sacred through the body and rites; every movement becomes the text of spiritual ecstasy (Eliade 1964).
Philosophers rewrite revelation as rationality; *Logos* became a secular form of the Word.

These five figures mark a shift in language: from verbal to myth, from consciousness to gesture, and from ecstasy to ratio. Yet behind that diversity, it all flows from one common source of divine consciousness.

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3. Qur'anic Verses and the Dimension of the Language of Revelation

The Qur'an affirms that apostolic experience is plural and cross-cultural. In *QS. Ghāfir [40]:78* states:

"And indeed, We have sent messengers before you; Some of them We have told you and some We have not told you."

This verse marks the Qur'anic recognition of the universality of the apostolate. From an anthropological perspective, this is a recognition of **a global prophetic phenomenon** that is not entirely recorded in Semitic history. Poststructuralistically, this verse can be read as the realization that revelation is a *trace*—a trace of God that is spread across various cultures and texts.

Furthermore, *QS. Ibrāhīm [14]:4* states:

"We did not send a messenger except in the language of his people, that he might explain to them."

The phrase *bi lisāni qawmihi* ("in the language of his people") is a theological as well as semiotic key. In Derrida's eyes, the meaning of revelation is not present outside of language; God speaks through a system of signs that can be understood by humans. Thus, revelation is always contextual and differential. God speaks with the idioms of the people, with symbols that they understand.

This verse also shows that revelation is **a linguistic and cultural event**, not a metaphysical event sterile of context. Thus, language in revelation does not mean only a means of communication, but rather an epistemic structure that governs the way man understands the divine.

Synthesis and Analysis

Through the lens of anthropology and poststructuralism, it can be concluded that all the great spiritual figures of the world carry out an identical function: to articulate divine consciousness in the language of their respective cultures.

- The Prophet used the language of the law and the text.
- Avatars use the language of myths and stories.
- Buddha used the language of reflection and silence.
- Shamans use body language and rites.
- Philosophers use the language of logos and concepts.

All these differences stem from a single reality: the same absolute entity reveals itself through many cultural grammars.

Poststructuralism helps us see that differences in God's name, terms of revelation, or ritual forms are not ontological differences, but rather semiotic differences. There is no single "center of meaning" that closes interpretation, for divine meaning is always present in *différance*—eternal delays and differences (Derrida 1978).

Thus, the Qur'an which acknowledges the plurality of the apostles and the language of revelation is in line with the principle that **the absolute speaks through all human languages**. Each Apostle, in an anthropological sense, is a cultural translation of the same divine consciousness.

Conclusion

This article shows that the differences between Prophets, Avatars, Buddhas, Shamans, and Philosophers are not differences in spiritual substance, but rather differences in language that hold the experience of absolute entities. Anthropologically, all of these figures function as a bridge between humans and the sacred. Poststructuralistically, divine revelation and consciousness are understood as texts that write themselves through diverse cultural structures.

The Qur'an itself affirms the universality and plurality of the language of revelation: there are known apostles and some who are not, and each messenger is sent in the language of his people. This statement affirms that God is present not in a single idiom, but through many semiotic forms born out of the social context of man.

Thus, **the one who is sent is actually one**, and **the one who speaks is also one**, but the **language that accommodates Him is many**. The spiritual figures of the world are merely reflections of one indivisible divine consciousness, which continues to write itself in the various languages of history.

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